RNA FOR A BETTER LIFE IN THE HEIGHTS

RIVERVIEW Neighborhood Association

March, 1996

232 Ogden Avenue - Jersey City, N.J. 07307 - (201) 798-0493

RNA IS NOT AFFILIATED WITH ANY POLITICAL PARTY, ORGANIZATION OR ELECTED OFFICIAL

The Incorporation of RNA

Riverview Neighborhood Association has started the process of becoming a nonprofit corporation. The purpose of this incorporation is to allow RNA to solicit donations and apply for grants for its community projects. The first step is to become a corporation in New Jersey. The second step is to apply for tax exempt status to the Internal Revenue Service.

Last month, RNA published a working draft of two documents to begin the process of incorporation: the certificate of incorporation and the by-laws of the group. (The by-laws were originally called the RNA Constitution.) Both documents were printed to allow public comment before they are voted on at the March 12th meeting.

The officers will discuss this process at the March meeting and explain any proposed changes - procedural or otherwise to the membership. Please ask any questions or comment on any provision that you think should be amended.

ANNUAL SPRING FLEA MARKET

RNA is now planning itsTwelfth Annual Spring Flea Market. At the March 12th meeting, our steering committee will be organizing the event. Volunteers and fresh new ideas are needed to help make this year's event a great success. This flea market serves as a fundraiser for RNA's many activities, including the publication of this newsletter.

MEMBERSHIP DUES

Most people do not realize that a neighborhood association requires active participation of its members. Part of that participation is the annual membership dues of $5 per person. This is not a lot of money when you consider that it entitles you to nine issues of our newsletter, and if you live within the boundaries, voting privileges in RNA. Please support your community by paying your dues at the next meeting, or sending a check, payable to RNA, to 232 Ogden Avenue. (Any paid member who has not received their newsletters or a membership card, please contact Jack Rea.)

The Executive Committee

RNA ELECTIONS

The following names have been placed in nomination for the 1996-1997 term for the RNA positions of Chair, Vice-chair, Treasurer, Secretary and Sgt.-at-Arms. Nominations will remain open until the March 12th meeting - at which time they will be closed and the election voting will take place.

To be eligible to vote and to hold office, you must have paid your annual 1996 dues and live within the constitutional boundaries of the Association. The boundaries are Ogden and Palisade Avenues from Cuneo Place to Congress Street.

CHAIRPERSON:	GREG BRICKEY VITO BRUNETTI PATRICK MOORE KATHY PACKARD
VICE- CHAIR:	CLARE ARCHER GREG BRICKEY MARIA TUZZO
SECRETARY:	KATHY PACKARD
TREASURER:	JACK REA
SGT.-AT-ARMS:	CAROL REBELOWSKI

Only one candidate has been nominated for each of the offices of Secretary, Treasurer, and Sgt-at-Arms. Please come to the March meeting with more nominations. You can nominate yourself - get involved! Participate in this important neighborhood activity, have a voice in decisions being made in your community.

COMING EVENTS

March 12th Meeting:

1) Election of RNA OFFICERS
2) Discussion & Vote for the Incorporation of RNA
3) SPRINGTIME ACTIVITIES: Annual Flea Market & Community Gardens
4) Change of Direction for Mountain Road

MEETING BEINGS AT 7:15 PM

LOCATION: THE HARBOR VIEW HEALTH CARE CENTER

CITY HALL MEETING

On February 20, 1996, RNA members Vito Brunetti and Hank Cesari met with City officials to discuss a variety of topics affecting our community. Representing the City were Timothy Sheridan and Maureen Corcoran of the Office of Constituent Services, Sgt. Steve Sansevere of the North District Police, John Mucha of the Engineering Department, Joe D'Souza of Traffic Engineering, Matt Hogan of the Department of Public Works, and Brian Henry of the Bureau of Vacant Buildings. Riverview NID manager Ufredo Merchan was also present.

VACANT BUILDINGS

The first topic discussed was the problem of vacant buildings on Palisade and Ogden Avenues. RNA is very impatient with the City's slow pace in getting these buildings inhabited again. RNA is concerned that an empty building - either by fire or foreclosure - breeds the following problems: break-ins, trespassing, drug dealing and other illicit activities. These problems in turn create a lawless and dangerous atmosphere that drives away new residential and business owners.

Mr. Henry stated that his office was working to get these buildings rehabilitated as quickly as possible. He gave the following accounts of these buildings:

381 Ogden Avenue: The City has been in constant contact with the owner, Mr. McLaughlin. We have encouraged him to comply with the 1993 order of the Construction Code Official to repair or remove said property. At best he has made some minor attempts to sell his building. He posted a "for sale by owner" sign and showed it to a few potential buyers. I have encouraged him to seek assistance in selling his property since he is elderly, does not live in the area and has trouble getting around due to a broken leg. At this time, the Bureau of Vacant Buildings is coordinating efforts with the Building Department and the Law Department to bring this matter to municipal court to request Mr. McLaughlin be fined for each day he is not in compliance with the Construction Code Official's orders.

385 Ogden Avenue: Breen Capital, Inc., the agent for First Boston, or FBTLC II, (the bulk lien holder who purchased the lien in 1993) has started foreclosure procedures on this building. The lienholder must have had the lien for a minimum of two years before proceedings could have been started. I am in contact with Breen and have asked them to prioritize the foreclosure. Once the foreclosure is complete they will look to quickly sell the property.

436-438 Palisade Avenue: This property is also in foreclosure by Breen and FBTLC II. All defendants in the action have been served and the file has been transferred to FBTLC II offices for subsequent lien discharge. It is impossible to know when the foreclosure profess will conclude; however, barring any unforeseen events, including last minute redemption, final judgment should occur within several months.

439 Palisade Avenue: This property is vacant and the City has boarded it up. Unfortunately, the front door is constantly being broken down because there is a person living in a separate dwelling behind this apartment building. The drug dealers are also using this building as a hang-out. The police and city officials have been called to try to secure this building until it can be rehabilitated.

[If there are any other local buildings that are vacant and need to be boarded up, everyone is urged to contact the **Bureau of Vacant Buildings at 547-4726**. A suggestion was made by a RNA member to start publicizing these buildings and printing a picture of them in the newsletter each month.]

MOUNTAIN ROAD: The renovation of Mountain Road is proceeding, with engineering designs for the Road to be completed by the fall of 1996 and the reopening before the fall of 1997.

RNA, who has lobbied for the Road's reopening, asked the City to address certain potential problems before it is reopened. (RNA printed a list of the problems in the December-January newsletter.) The major concern was that drivers would use Ogden Avenue between Griffith and Franklin Streets as a by-pass route to avoid the traffic and lights on Palisade Avenue. (This problem is already occurring on Ogden Avenue, north of Riverview-Fisk Park, where drivers enter on Griffith Street and travel to Congress Street to avoid the traffic and lights on Palisade Avenue.)

After a rather long discussion, a suggestion was made that the one way direction of Mountain Road, which is presently planned to be west to east - be changed so that the traffic flow would be from east to west. This solution would prevent any traffic build-up on Ogden. It would also prevent any speeding on the road because it would be an up-hill route.

If this new suggestion were adopted by RNA and recommended to the City, it would create the following traffic patterns on our local streets:

a) Mountain Road: east to west;
b) Holland Street: east to west;
c) Congress Street: two way;
d) Patterson Plank Road: two way; and
e) New York Avenue: two way.

[This suggestion to change the direction of Mountain Road will be discussed and voted on at the March meeting.]

ZONING SURVEY

In January, members of RNA met with Robert Cotter, the Director of Planning to discuss a project that will help protect our residential neighborhood by limiting future development.

Mr. Cotter wants to upgrade the Master Zoning Plan for Jersey City for the purpose of accurately reflecting the residential areas in the City. He needs an up-to-date block-by block map of the City, which would include the residential one and two family homes, the apartment buildings and the businesses. He has begun that process by asking the help of neighborhood groups to complete individual block surveys of their communities.

Within the next few months, RNA has volunteered to make a survey of its own ten block area. Ten volunteers are needed, preferably one from each block in RNA, to complete a survey of the buildings on their block. We will discuss this at the March meeting.

RNA Minutes: February 13, 1995

At our February meeting, Jersey City Mayor Bret Schundler spoke about the City's deficit problems, and fielded questions from the membership. RNA heard from Ufredo Merchan, the new NID manager, and from Sgt. Sansevere, of the North District Community Service Police. Nominations were also opened for the 1996 RNA officers.

Mayor Schundler:

The Mayor came to get support for his business payroll tax proposal. He presented the history of the City's $230 million debt, which arose primarily from two sources - the tax appeals that followed the 1989 doubling of commercial real estate assessments ($102 million), and a 1991 bond issue that funded city operating expenses. The Mayor presented details of this year's budget, which must include a $20 million payment on these debts. He gave two alternatives for raising money: a $4 increase in property taxes, which he says represents a 23% increase, or a 1% payroll tax on city businesses. The payroll tax, if approved, would be terminated when the $230 million debt is paid off. The Mayor asked the listeners to contact their state legislators and the Governor to express support for his payroll tax; he said that the state government has only heard from business on this issue.

After the presentation, the Mayor took questions from the members. Asked about new construction on the waterfront near Newport, the mayor said that although there is still a tax abatement on those properties, a recent audit has resulted in a 50% increase in income. In response to several related questions on the state of our neighborhood - trash and garbage, dog waste, loose pit bulls - the Mayor referred to the new Neighborhood Improvement District (NID) program and our neighborhood manager, Ufredo Merchan.

The Mayor was complemented on the snow removal efforts after the January blizzard. However, on the crime fighting front, the Mayor said that financial considerations won't allow for hiring more cops, but some other changes have been made to get more police on the street: reassignments of police from clerical jobs to street jobs; and the initiation of new work shifts from 8.5 hours to 8 hours.

Some members stated that they have seen no dent in the drug traffic on Palisade and Ogden Avenues, even after a year of Community Police involvement. The Mayor stated that they are trying different things, but did not want to elaborate. He said that taxes and safety are the primary concerns throughout the city. One member suggested looking in to methods used successfully in other urban areas.

Abandoned buildings were discussed; the Mayor said the city is accelerating foreclosures on abandoned buildings, and described a program for mortgages for two and three family homes.

Concerns were aired about potential problems when Mountain Road reopens, making Palisade & Franklin, already a problem, into a thoroughfare. One member asked where to send concerns on this issue; the Mayor referred to the NID program, and suggested contacting the NID manager.

Neighborhood Improvement District:

Kevin Sluka, Director of Jersey City Public Works introduced Ufredo Merchan, manager for the Riverview NID, which includes part of the RNA area. Mr. Merchan has been getting trained on writing summons, municipal court procedures, conflict resolution, and parking enforcements. Mr. Merchan was chosen by a group of RNA members, from among a group of candidates recommended by the Department of Public Works. RNA will also assess his performance. The NID security guard contract was in the bidding process at the time of the meeting, and should be assigned soon.

Mr. Merchan spoke briefly to the group to introduce himself. He will be speaking at each RNA meeting from now on. An office and phone will be set up in the Municipal Building (325 Palisade Avenue), but the primary means for contacting him will be via his **BEEPER Telephone Number: 205-8216.**

Community Service Police :

Sgt. Sansevere and Officer Bjalko spoke to the group about Community Service (CS) and Police activities in the neighborhood. Two new CS Officers will be assigned to the area, with coverage 7 days a week. Jackie Bjalko, one of our current CS Officers, will be reassigned to a radio car. There has been some problems with the CS phone number at the North District, and they will be getting new lines.

As of the February meeting, there had been 16 arrests for drug offenses in our area. Half of all the drug arrests in the North District are in our area. Half of all drug arrests are juveniles.

In response to RNA complaints about loose dogs, the Police will be distributing a list of dog related ordinances to all officers. This list was compiled by Ann Singer of the Hudson County Animal League.

One member asked about the "Take back the streets" program; Sgt Sansevere said he would compile information for us about this.

Spring Activities:

Work will soon begin in Riverview Park and the Riverview Community Gardens for the spring season. Volunteers are needed, and garden plots will be available. **Contact Greg at 792-6390 to volunteer or for information.**

RNA Business:

Motions were made and passed for expenses to be incurred in the incorporation process: $100 for state and federal filing fees, and $55 for one half cost of Bar Association tapes that describe the process (these tapes are being purchased cooperatively with the Sgt Anthony Neighborhood Association, which is also incorporating).

Kathy Packard, Secretary

RIVERVIEW N.I.D.

February 1996

Greetings

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself and provide you with a brief description of the Neighborhood Improvement District program.

Part of Your association, the Riverview Neighborhood Association, is located within the boundaries of our Riverview NID which I will manage. As your NID manager I look forward to meeting and working with you and your group to deal with your quality of life issues to improve the cleanliness and safety within the community.

If you have any questions, comments or service requests please contact me through the Dept. of Public Works at 547-5682.

Sincerely,

Ufredo Merchan

Neighborhood Improvement Districts

In order to provide cleaner and safer streets Mayor Schundler and the Dept. of Public Works are introducing the Neighborhood Improvement Districts (NIDs) pilot program. NIDs are residential areas of approximately 50 block faces.

Each NID will receive a Community Police Officer, Neighborhood Guard and a Sanitation Crew consisting of streetscapers.

Each will be expected to participate in community events to meet the needs of the residents as identified by the residents.

Community Police Officer

Police commanders will assign CPOs to either a foot, bike or moped patrol based on the size and anticipated scope of police work within each NID.

Neighborhood Guard

Guards will act as an extra set of eyes and ears to deter crime. Guards will be unarmed but will be able to communicate with the assigned CPO and police through the use of a radio.

Sanitation Crew

Streetscapers will provide daily sweeping, cleaning or shoveling as necessary. Streetscapers will periodically paint, remove graffiti and perform others services as directed by the manager.

Resident Participation

You will be given a chance to direct the program through determining starting times, work schedules, job requirements and assessing and recommending changes of assigned personnel to best meet the needs of the community.

Increasing community participation in decision making is a major goal of the NID program. Managers and the NID Office will organize community meetings to identify and prioritize neighborhood issues, alert residents of existing or proposed city projects and increase citizen participation in problem solving. Priority issues will be brought to and discussed with appropriate city departmental personnel to incorporate local concerns.

ATTACHED IS A MAP OF NID.

UPCOMING

Soon I would like to Schedule a meeting to bring together the Neighborhood Associations which encompass the RIVERVIEW NID to increase participation.

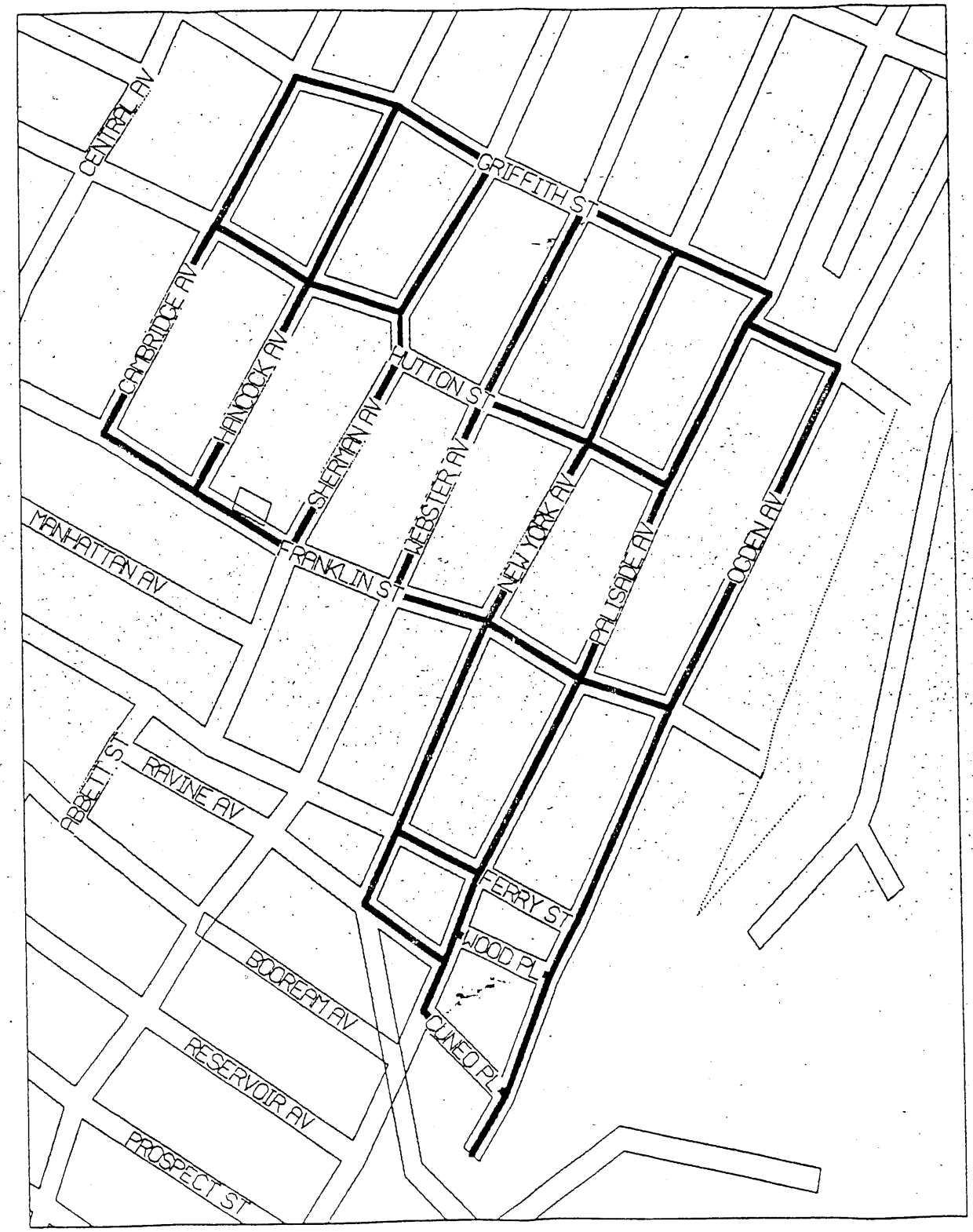
If you have preference regarding a particular day or time, or have other questions or comments please feel free to contact me at 547-5682.

Ufredo Merchan
Neighborhood Manager

Bret Schundler, Mayor
CITY OF JERSEY CITY DPW
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
575 ROUTE 440 * JERSEY CITY, NJ 07305
DPW Dir., Kevin Sluka

N.I.D. D

Riverview



Bulletin board

To our Dear Friend Gert,

We just wanted to say we are thinking of you,
Even though the moments we have able to share have been few,
You always would bake and made the best cake, and
We hope soon you will be feeling as good as new.

Friends at RNA ,by Valerie Rea

From Valerie's Kitchen:

Quick Vanilla Rice Pudding

INGREDIENTS:

- 4 Cups of 2% Lowfat Milk
- 1 Egg (well beaten)
- 1 Package (4 Serving Size) of Vanilla Pudding (non instant)
- 1 Cup of Minute Rice (uncooked)
- 1/4 Cup of Raisins (Optional)

1) Gradually stir milk and egg into pudding mix.
2) Add rice and raisins.
3) Stir over medium heat until mixture comes to boil.
4) Cool 5 minutes, stirring twice.
5) Poor into serving bowl.
6) Sprinkle with cinnamon.
7) Serve warm or refrigerate. Place plastic wrap on surface of pudding while cooling.

MARCH

Wearing of the Green, Top of the Morning to you,
Celebration of St. Pat's Day,
and of course, St Joseph's Day,
Springtime and RNA's Flea Market is not far behind!
Enjoy and Happy St. Pat's Day to you.
Madeline Rea

IT'S A GOOD THING: If anyone has any free time that they would like to spend in a charitable way, they should consider volunteering at the Harbor View Health Care Center. Sometimes just a short visit, a conversation or a game with one of the residents, can fill their sometimes lonely days.

CONTRIBUTE TO YOUR NEWSLETTER

Drop off articles, comments or recipes in the mailbox, attached to the gate, at 232 Ogden Ave. Mark the envelope, "RNA NEWSLETTER." The next deadline is **Friday, March 22, 1996.**

Recycle this Newsletter, Pass it on to a Friend!

POLICEBEAT

Residents can contact **Community Service Police Officers Joseph Sarao (COS #2637) and Nelson Adamo** if they have a problem, a safety concern or knowledge of criminal activity at **547-5350** (the North District station's frontdesk) or **547-5719** (community service number). When leaving a message, include your name, telephone number, street address, the nature of the problem and a date and time of the message. All calls will be kept confidential.

A **Community Service Survey** form distributed by the North District Police Department is reprinted below. The purpose of the form is to alert the police to particular chronic problems in our neighborhood. Please fill the form out and mail it to the North District at 282 Central Avenue. (You can remain anonymous.)

JERSEY CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT
NORTH DISTRICT
282 Central Avenue, Jersey City, 07307
547-5350: Front Desk
547-5719: Community Service
Community Service Survey

Residence_____School_____Business_____
Name:_____ CSO Post#_____
Address:_____ CSO Name:_____
Home Phone (optional):_____
Business/School Phone:_____

PROBLEMS/CONCERNS:

Disorderly Groups_____	Drug Activity_____
Loud Music_____	Abandoned Bldg_____
Traffic Conditions_____	Abandoned Cars_____
Parking Complaints_____	Noise Complaints_____
Animal Complaints_____	Other(Specify below)__

Other Problems:_____
_____
_____
Locations:_____
_____
_____
Comments:_____
_____
_____

NEWSLETTER STAFF

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SEE YOU AT OUR NEXT MEETING ON MARCH 12th at 7:15 PM at the HARBOR VIEW HEALTH CARE CENTER.

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Become an active part of your community
and join us at our next meeting on
Tuesday, March 12th at 7:15 PM

VOLUNTEER
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COMMUNITY
GARDENS

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RIVERVIEW NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

FOR A BETTER LIFE IN THE HEIGHTS

RNA

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Vito Brunetti
Chairperson

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

Greg Brickey
Vice-chairperson

PARKS

Kathy Packard
Secretary

FLEA MARKET

Jack Rea
Treasurer

NEWSLETTER

Carol Rebelowski
Sgt. at Arms

RIVERVIEW NID PROGRAM

At the February meeting, we met our Neighborhood Improvement District (NID) Manager Ufredo Merchan. He will be working to improve our community under the auspices of this new City program. He will be responsible for monitoring our local problems, including sanitation, building code violations, dog litter and illegal parking. He will be working with the Department of Public Works and the Community Police to improve the quality of life in our area.

Ufredo will be at each of our monthly meetings to announce his plans, discuss ways to improve our neigborhood and listen to our complaints. He has already started working by introducing himself to the local residents and businesses in our area. During the week, anyone can reach Ufredo by telephoning his **beeper number: 205-8216** and leaving their own telephone number.

RNA urges all its members and friends to take the time and participate in this program. Let Ufredo know about any problem you may know about on your block or in our community. He can only be effective if we, the residents inform him about our local problems. We should support him and make sure he is doing the job to the best of his ability.

An introductory message from Ufredo and a map of the Riverview NID appears on pages 4 and 5 .